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What an inclusive school looks like

Inclusive education is about the full participation and achievement of all learners. In fully inclusive schools, children and young people with special education needs are engaged and achieving through being present, participating and learning.

This information sheet describes what an inclusive school looks like and feels like in the English-medium context. Use this information to help reflect upon and review the inclusive values, policies and practices in your school.

At inclusive schools, children with special education needs:

- ▶ *are present* at their chosen school, with their siblings and friends, all of the time
- ▶ *are participating and engaged* in class and out of class, with their peers, all of the time, doing what their peers do
- ▶ *are learning and achieving*, experiencing success, being challenged, learning within the curriculum and enjoying things they're interested in
- ▶ *feel like they belong*, enjoy school, want to go to school and have friends.

To make this happen, schools:

- ▶ foster the identity, language and culture of all learners
- ▶ have high expectations of all their learners
- ▶ are strongly values-driven and foster these values in learners and adults
- ▶ are innovative and flexible
- ▶ adapt to the child or young person rather than making them adapt to fit the school
- ▶ have processes for identifying and supporting the needs and aspirations of Māori and Pasifika learners with special education needs and their whānau
- ▶ have strong leaders who communicate

and model clear values and expectations

- ▶ have good systems and processes in place for enrolling and welcoming learners with special education needs and identifying their needs and strengths
- ▶ work effectively with parents, families, whānau and their wider communities
- ▶ have self-review processes in place to ensure ongoing improvement of policies and practices
- ▶ support the learning and professional development of their teachers to use *The New Zealand Curriculum* and *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* to meet the needs of all learner

Which means our schools will look like this:

PRESENT	School-wide culture <i>The way a school welcomes learners, and the feel of the school</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The school welcomes all learners and makes sure their transition into school is smooth and well planned. ▶ The school fosters a caring, safe and respectful whole-school environment and shares this with the wider school community. ▶ The school fosters the identity, language and culture of all learners. ▶ The school has processes for identifying and supporting the needs and aspirations of Māori and Pasifika learners with special education needs and their whānau.
	School leadership <i>The strength of its leaders</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The school's leaders foster inclusive values, establish clear expectations, and model desired behaviours. ▶ The school's leaders create a safe physical and learning environment. ▶ The school's leaders create a collaborative environment that supports teachers and encourages collective responsibility for learners. ▶ The school's leaders support teacher inquiry and development.
PARTICIPATING AND ENGAGING	School-wide systems and processes <i>The way the school runs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The school has processes for identifying learners with special education needs and their strengths. ▶ The school is clearly willing to adapt the school's physical environment, as well as its systems and processes, to meet the needs of learners with special education needs. ▶ The school identifies, uses, coordinates and manages the services and support available to learners with special education needs. ▶ The school has school-wide systems for planning, monitoring and reporting on the presence, participation, engagement, progress and achievement of learners with special education needs. ▶ The school uses data to inform decisions, problem-solve and monitor school-wide practices. ▶ The school regularly evaluates teaching practice using good-quality school-wide systems and uses data to improve teaching quality for learners with special education needs.
	Parent, whānau and community connections <i>The strength of its relationships</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The school partners with parents, families and whānau regarding their child's learning and achievements. ▶ The school respects, values and uses the knowledge parents have of their child's needs, learning, development and achievement. ▶ The school taps into the expertise within its community and the special education sector to understand the best way to provide for learners with special education needs.

LEARNING AND ACHIEVING	<p>Teaching and learning</p> <p><i>The knowledge and skills of its teachers</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The teachers promote an achievement-oriented culture and have high expectations of all learners, providing challenges that stretch learning. ▶ Teachers are skilled at using <i>The New Zealand Curriculum</i> and <i>Te Marautanga o Aotearoa</i> to meet the learning needs of all learners, inside and outside of the classroom. ▶ The classroom learning programme is planned to provide each child with learning experiences and challenges that relate to their interests, needs and goals. ▶ Support staff have the knowledge and skills to work within the classroom programme alongside the teacher. ▶ Teachers develop constructive and respectful relationships with learners and with others involved in their learning. ▶ Teachers inquire into the impact of their teaching on learners. ▶ All children take part in a full range of experiences outside the classroom.
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BELONGING	<p>What an inclusive school feels like</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ <i>Children and young people with special education needs</i> will feel confident, will feel like they belong, will enjoy school, will want to go to school, will have friends, will have a say in what goes on for them, will feel challenged at school and will feel proud of the things they have learned and achieved. ▶ <i>Parents of all children in the school</i> will be confident that their child or young person receives the attention and support in the classroom to achieve their potential and will appreciate their child's valuing of diversity. ▶ <i>Parents of children and young people with special education needs</i> will be confident in their child's school and teachers, will enjoy seeing their children learning, achieving and having friends, and will be secure in the knowledge that their children are safe, happy and belong. ▶ <i>Teachers of children and young people with special education needs</i> will be confident in their teaching and their classroom programme, will feel supported, will enjoy the achievements of all the children in their class and will have professional pride in their own teaching. ▶ <i>Principals and boards</i> will be confident that their school is a safe and respectful place and will enjoy and have pride in the achievements of all the children and young people in their school.
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This information sheet has been informed by:

- ▶ Evaluation indicators from the Education Review Office's report *Including Students with High Needs* (June 2010)
- ▶ *Te Kotahitanga* research and professional development programme (<http://tekotahitanga.tki.org.nz/About>)
- ▶ The UK's Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education's *Index for inclusion, developing learning and participation in schools* (2002) by Tony Booth and Mel Ainscow
- ▶ *School Planning – Supporting Learners with Special Education Needs*, Ministry of Education (2012)

This information sheet is a *Success for All* initiative, supporting a fully inclusive education system for every child and young person.

For more information:

For more information, contact your local Ministry of Education office or call the special education information line on 0800 622 222.

Visit www.minedu.govt.nz for information about Ministry services and support, and for planning and reporting requirements.

Visit www.tki.org.nz for useful tips and tools to support an inclusive school and classroom.

New Zealand Government

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